

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 MC-02 EURE-00 PRS-01 SAM-01 SSO-00

INRE-00 NSCE-00 /051 W
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O R 071606Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5411

SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1243

SECDEF FOR SECRETARY SCHLESINGER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, NL

SUBJ: F-104 REPLACEMENT: MOD VREDELING'S MARCH 10
MEETING WITH SECRETARY SCHLESINGER

1. VREDLING HAS SENT EMBASSYWORD THROUGH HIS CONFIDENTANT AND DEFENSE MINISTRY PRESS SPOKESMAN SLIGHTING THAT VREDELING WILL WANT TO DISCUSS THE F-104 REPLACEMENT QUESTION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STRONG AVERSION OF HIS LABOR PARTY TO GIVING ANY NEW IMPULSE TO THE ARMS RACE. SPECIFICALLY, VREDELING HOPES THE SECRETARY WILL BE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIM WITH ANY INFORMATION US MAY HAVE INDICATING SOVIET PLANS TO BUILD A NEW LIMITED SUPERIORITY FIGHTER AIRCRAFT FOR THE 1980'S.

2. VREDELING'S CONCERNS IN THIS REGARD STEM FROM A STATEMENT MADE BY LABOR PARTY DEFENSE EXPERT PIETER DANKERT DURING FEBRUARY 11 PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON DEFENSE BUDGET. SLIGHTING PROVIDED ENGLISH TRANSLATION AS FOLLOWS:

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3. BEGIN QUOTE: WE HAVE NO INDICATIONS THAT THE SOVIET UNION AT THIS VERY MOMENT IS DEVELOPING AIRCRAFT FOR GROUND SUPPORT AND RELATED AIR SUPERIORITY MISSIONS, WHICH COULD BE COMPARED WITH FOR INSTANCE THE F-16. IN CASE THE FOUR GOVERNMENTS MIGHT DECIDE TO BUY THE F-16, THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE WILL HAVE TO CONVINCE MY PARTY THAT A SIMILAR WEAPON SYSTEM IS INDEED UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOVIET UNION AND THAT THIS KIND OF AIRCRAFT WILL BE INTRODUCED IN OPERATIONAL SERVICE IN CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS ROUGHLY AT THE MOMENT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE F-16 AND THAT NATO IN CENTRAL EUROPE WOULD HAVE INADEQUATE NUMBERS OF SIMILAR AIRCRAFT BY THEN. END QUOTE.

4. LACKING THE RELEVANT INFORMATION, SLIGHTING SAID THAT VREDELING HAS NOT ATTEMPTED TO REPLY TO THE DANKERT STATEMENT BUT CONSIDERS IT ESSENTIAL TO DO SO BEFORE HE CAN RECOMMEND THE SELECTION OF A LIMITED SUPERIORITY FIGHTER TO REPLACE THE F-104S.

5. SLIGHTING SAID VREDELING WOULD ALSO WANT TO TALK TO THE SECRETARY ABOUT PRICE GUARANTEES AND HOW THE F-16 PROPOSAL SUPPORTS THE RATIONALIZATION AND SPECIALIZATION OBJECTIVE WHICH THE SECRETARY AND VREDELING SHARE. SLIGHTING REITERATED, HOWEVER, THAT WHAT VREDELING NEEDS MOST OF ALL IS SOME INTELLIGENCE, HOWEVER PRELIMINARY, WHICH CAN BE USED TO DISARM THOSE IN THE LABOR PARTY AND ELSEWHERE ON THE LEFT WING WHO ARE ASSERTING WITH THEIR CUSTOMARY VEHEMENCE THAT THE NETHERLANDS MUST NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ARMS RACE BY CONTRACTING NOW FOR A HIGH-PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT.

6. SUGGEST REVIEW OF THE HAGUE 980 FOR A SUMMARY OF VREDELING'S ASPIRATIONS TO PRESERVE AND DEVELOP THE EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY WHICH HE WILL PROBABLY ALSO WANT TO DISCUSS AT THE MARCH 10 MEETING.

7. SLIGHTING SAID THAT TO KEEP PEACE IN THE CONSORTIUM FAMILY IT HAD BEEN ARRANGED FOR VREDELING TO DEBRIEF AFTER THE MEETING TO THE BELGIAN, DANISH AND NORWEGIAN
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AMBASSADORS IN WASHINGTON. VREDELING MAY ALSO WISH TO MAKE HIMSELF AVAILABLE TO WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS OF NEWSPAPERS FROM THESE COUNTRIES AND THE NETHERLANDS.
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